

Book Review: Increasing Effectiveness of the Community College Financial Model: A Global Perspective for the Global Economy

Edited by Stewart E. Sutin, Daniel Derrico, Rosalind Latiner Raby, and Edward J. Valeau.
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Based on the California Master Plan, higher education institutions are classified into three tiers beginning with the University of California, and followed by California State Universities, and finally community colleges. In this model, the mission of community colleges aims to provide two-year associate and four-year bachelor's degrees and help meet the local needs of post-secondary education demands in California. In the past, state governments in the United States covered almost 100 percent of the community colleges' budgets. However, when state governments reluctantly cut funding to community colleges according due to the recent global financial crisis, community colleges were faced with the question of how to find other financial inputs? At the same time, along with increasing global competition in the field of higher education, community colleges also need to expand their financial expenses to increase the quality of teaching and learning in order to compete with other higher education institutions. Within such a volatile environment, how can community colleges gain extra financial support or increase the effectiveness of their financial models?

To the above questions, the book, *Increasing Effectiveness of the Community College Financial Model: A Global Perspective for the Global Economy*, provides both theoretically-based and practice-applied descriptions and case-study analyses on the financial challenges and responses at the level of community colleges all over world. Theoretic chapters focus on various higher education topics including administrative leadership, governance, and financial management and planning for institutional change, while the five country case studies illustrate successful financial models from community colleges in Canada, China, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Overall the book aims to encourage colleges to seek a better and more sustainable financial model within pressing internal and external institutional changes. In an attempt to meet the ever-changing dynamics associated with globalization, Coeditors Stewart E. Sutin, Daniel Derrico, Rosalind Latiner Raby, and Edward J. Valeau write in their introductory chapter that

“effectiveness in meeting the rapidity and complexity of change requires institutional ability and highly effective internal processes that provide a foundation for new holistic change” (p. 3). Leadership is central to the theme of the book and is interwoven throughout each chapter. Community college leaders should be able to use the book to help them construct a clear understanding and vision of how to focus on successful models for financial success. As is emphasized in the book's Preface by John Roueche, “no one would minimize the importance of vision clarity in transforming organizations” (p. xiv).

In contemporary times, the success of community colleges no longer solely hinges upon leaders' and administrators' authority or traditional roles. Rather the book emphasizes the need for leaders to portray characteristics of resiliency, including business knowledge, immediate responsive competencies, and adequate decision-making behaviors. For instance, Valeau and John C. Petersen emphasize the essential role Board of Trustees play in community colleges: “Today Boards cannot afford to simply serve as watchdogs but instead must become stewards of the enterprise and move away from behavior that is counterproductive to a sworn oath, and that is detrimental to the needs of the institutions” (p. 44). Higher education administrators' ability to plan strategically and allocate resources based on this strategic planning is also key in the process of leading the success of community colleges. As is written in Chapter 6 by Brenda S. Trettel and John L. Yeager, “to maximize the benefits of this process, it is important that all community college stakeholders—trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the general public they serve—be included in the planning and development of the process” (p. 93).

Internationalization and operating and financial administration on campus are also becoming common foci on community college campuses. In Chapter 2, Raby and Valeau argue that the “internationalization of the campus and curriculum are responses as the landscape changes and the key to future success” (p. 27). Moreover, Robert Frost, Edward T. Raspiller, and John J.

Sygielski (Chapter 4) express that “international education may be the one of the best examples of how resource development efforts *can fail* when they are done with a short-term, one-dimensional (recruitment only) money-making agenda” (p. 60). On the other hand, well-planned and preventive-maintenance skills of successful administrators can stimulate the cost effectiveness operations at community colleges. According to Chris Moran’s more than 30 years of experience in facilities management (Chapter 8), he notes that the most successful higher education administrators need “energy, focus, tact, a diverse technical knowledge, and exemplary leadership and financial skills” (p. 125). Recognizing community colleges have many opportunities to increase their financial resources and balance their expenditures by proactive internationalization efforts and well-rounded administration, Derrico (Chapter 7) simultaneously argues that “the planning, developing, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting for the annual and longer-term operational budget is a critical piece of the success of any community college” (pp. 113-114).

Increasing Effectiveness for the Community College Model emphasizes the essential role vision and mission statements play in helping community colleges deal with the challenges in today’s world. Comparing traditional to contemporary approaches of measurement metrics, Steven M. Kinsella, Valeau, and Raby (Chapter 9) deem that “given current economic conditions, the time to introduce performance-based budget, and possibly activity-based costing may be right” (p. 139). Derrico and Sutin (Chapter 5) also highlight that “key indicators of institutional effectiveness must reflect the quantitative results of revenue generation and cost containment initiatives, as well as quality control needed to support the academic mission of the college” (p. 78). As a result, as stated by Sutin in Chapter 10, “Community colleges will manifest a more resilient financial model capable of supporting higher quality, affordable and accessible education that might not otherwise have been achievable” (158). *Increasing Effectiveness of the Community College Financial Model* successfully bridges financial theories in administrative practices at community colleges. Some empirical research and case studies contained in the book exhibit various strategies and leadership toward the improvement of financing community colleges, which can help administrators review their current situations and then further find the most appropriate and applicable financial models for themselves.

Moreover, the 27 contributors in this book call on community college administrators to “shed the mindset of top heavy financial dependency upon government appropriations and tuition-based revenues, and manifest a culture of financial and educational self-reliance” (p. 158) in order to demonstrate principles of fiscal

prudence and good governance. Many contributors argue that clear mission statements and improved financial models will be the springboard for the robust and sustainable development for community colleges of the future.

The book has a predominant United States emphasis, with a few country case study examples of community college financial models in other contexts. We recognize that community colleges in the United States are quite different from those found in China and Uganda; more research could build upon the need to highlight successful financial models in other international contexts not contained in this book. Although there are no easy answers to questions about how administrators can successfully help their community college find a financially-successful niche in an increasingly global economy and higher education market, the editors and authors of this volume offer several possible strategies and suggestions worthy of consideration.

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